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THE YIELDS OF GROWING PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

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WIDENING HORIZONS

New technologies invite expanded teaching and learning environments. They widen the horizons of education, open new training vistas, and challenge the views that have previously been held about methodology and strategies. Client expectations flourish as the fields of innovation grow. The service traditions of teaching and librarianship will always remain the root of good practice. However, there is an ever-growing demand for new strains of philosophy and methodology to meet the market demand for more seasonal, hardy and flexible vocational education and training products.

Technology's tools do have the capacity to increase the learning harvest. But it goes against the training grain, and there is very little gain, if new technology is wielded with old paradigms.

There's an old story about a bush tree feller who had wielded his saw and hatchet for many years. On one of his infrequent visits to town, the local tool salesman persuaded the tree feller to buy a new chainsaw, explaining that it could chop through tree trunks in a fraction of the time of his old equipment. It was some time before the salesman saw the tree feller again, but when he did, he asked how much more firewood he was now able to cut with his new chainsaw. He was stunned when the tree feller growled that the new tool took so much longer, and cut so poorly compared with his old one, that he had thrown it in the back of the truck in disgust and then left it there. The puzzled salesman said he had never before had such a dissatisfied customer. He asked the tree feller to bring the chainsaw to his shop so he could test it. Next day, the chainsaw was dragged from the very bottom of the truck's tray. The salesman yanked the lever on the starting cord and revved up the saw. "Hell," yelled the tree feller. "What's that bloody noise?"

At Brisbane Institute of TAFE we saw that simply having the availability of new technology does not guarantee more productivity, or the development of more effective learning outcomes. Even with new technology, yields are still dependent on weather - whether those who wield the technology do so with understanding, clear intent, skill and discrimination.

Our library and delivery teams are determined not to become teaching and learning Luddites, forever looking longingly back to past pedagogues and spurning advances in delivery possibilities. Together we seek out new teaching and learning tools, investigate their capabilities and how best to apply them, and test their appropriateness in pilot programs. We seek

to avoid the uninformed application of new techniques that could lead us barking up the wrong trees.

Vocational education and training might be growing, but the environment in which it is seeking to thrive has changed significantly. TAFE Institutes were once more sheltered from open market forces. Competition policy has forced public providers to share crop with private providers. The Australian Recognition Framework demands mutual recognition of the qualifications produced by all Registered Training Organisations. National Training Packages, which are driven by industry, focus on picking up workplace competencies, so that training organisations must till the knowledge and skills outputs expected on-the-job, as well as nourishing the training inputs off-the-job. Technology has opened the local market so that flexible training crops can be supplied by regional, interstate and even international producers. New apprenticeships and user choice training purchases encourage employers to look around the market place, to examine what's on offer and choose training that has the most appealing texture and flavour for their enterprises. They are seeking delivery at specific times and places, packaged to meet enterprise and industry preferences. This includes delivery in their actual workplace.

TEACHER/LIBRARIAN PARTNERSHIPS

However, Brisbane Institute of TAFE (BIT) is also aware that introducing technology to training can propagate doubtful hybrids devoid of the educational integrity that sustains adult inquiry. Lifelong learning requires more than just prepackaged courses for learner consumption, whether on campus or in distance modes. It also requires modeling by those espousing it. This means that those sprouting life long learning should be thriving on it themselves. BIT staff look for the pollination of collegial support, teaming up with study buddies and cross fertilizing ideas from different employment streams such as library, teaching and administration, and different delivery areas from traditional trades to Information Technology.

The Institute has cultivated flexible options, including those employing technology, through teacher-librarian partnerships. When both step outside their usual furrows and plan, design and even deliver together, the capacity to meet diverse client needs grows. The seeds of the partnership strategy were in the Virtual Staff College concept. Through this program, TAFE Queensland Institutes nominated staff to enrol in the University of Southern Queensland's Graduate Certificate in Open and Distance Learning. At the Brisbane Institute of TAFE, cross-functional teams put forward business cases to produce flexible learning products for vocational training areas. The Flexible Learning Network, which grew out of the Virtual Staff College model, continued the librarian/teaching convergence. Librarians provide expertise beyond information sourcing, to incorporating the information literacy and information management skills that are the enabling skills of lifelong learning. They buddy up with teachers who contribute their technical and instructional design expertise. Through living the life long learning creed, both partners also undertake the technological upskilling required to graft new electronic species to long established industry and vocational skills.

PEOPLE AND PRODUCT SAMPLES

We would like to show you a bunch of products that have been produced by librarian/teacher co-operation. We will share their creation, cultivation and implementation.

Firstly a sample of projects demonstrating partnerships in product development:

- Icons of Brisbane Image Archive
- Welders Certification Theory Online
- A Selection of Parasites in Dogs and Cats
- Web Templates

Icons of Brisbane Image Archive

Maurice Wilson (Heritage Parks and Gardens Teacher) and Janice Cook (Grovely Faculty Librarian) have developed the 'Icons of Brisbane' website at <http://www.brisbane.tafe.net/icons>. This site provides Brisbane Institute of TAFE web developers with an image archive of notable Brisbane landmarks for inclusion in web design elements such as banners and buttons.

Self-paced training notes at the site explain the development of a web image archive using Adobe Photoshop 5.5. Relevant links to sections in the Web Templates website are also provided (see Web Templates project below).

Welders Certification Theory Online

Kevin Bluhdorn (a Principle Teacher in the Metal Fabrication Team) and Pauline Fountain (the Flexible Learning Network Facilitator for the Gateway Campus) are developing Welders Certification Theory Online to be hosted TAFE Online at <http://www.tafe.net>.

Although Pauline is authoring Welders Certification Theory Online and Kevin is acting as the 'content' expert, Kevin will be a participant in the Web Design Intensive in Semester 2 2000. This will enable him to keep the site up-to-date as well as develop further training products (such as 'Weld Test Inspectors and Supervisors Theory Online') to provide Metals Industry workers with more flexible access to post-trade training programs.

A Selection of Parasites in Dogs and Cats

Jane Wassell (Faculty Librarian) is a participant in the Monday evening Semester 1 2000 Web Design Intensive. Her project website is a learning resource for Animal Science students and covers a selection of parasites in dogs and cats. Jane is working as web author with Animal Science Teacher Patricia Clarke.

Web Templates

Sandra Lawrence (Business Studies Teacher and Acting Educational Design and Development Manager) and Mark Jones (Librarian and BIT Web Coordinator) developed the Web Templates Project to assist educational delivery teams develop a web presence on the Brisbane Institute of TAFE website e.g. Business Studies, Art & Design and Animal Sciences have used the templates.

The Web Templates website at <http://www.brisbane.tafe.net/webtemplates> provides access to self-paced notes about using Level 1 and Level 2 web

template files, the digital camera, and developing web banners using fireworks. Faculty Librarians also use the Web Templates site to support staff training in digital technologies.

TWO SPECIFIC PROJECT SNAPSHOTS

Now to samples of projects demonstrating partnerships in both product development and product implementation or delivery

- Core and Foundation Competencies
- Macromedia Intensives

Core and Foundation Competencies

Rick Dale and Michelle Godfrey, Gateway Faculty Librarians have developed an Internet-based training and assessment resource available for Occupational Health and Safety and Industrial Relations, which can be adapted to any industry course.

In the trade-based areas it is currently utilised by delivery teams in Applied Engineering, such as Locksmithing, Glazing, Sheet Metal, Electrotechnology and Boat Building, as well as the Construction teams in Building and Stonemasonry. Although Rick and Michelle have been responsible for the web authoring and content customisation for each delivery area, they have done so in partnership with a range of Teachers, particularly, Peter Beaton (Stonemasonry), Alan Clarke (Electrotechnology), Geoff Weston (Workplace Learning Centre), Cliff Forrester (Locksmithing) and Bill Thomlinson (Glazing)

As well as developing the product, the Library team has pioneered the Project Supervision Model at the Gateway Campus where Faculty Librarians work as part of the delivery team. Teachers now have the option of clustered competency delivery of underpinning theory for Occupational Health and Safety, Industrial Relations, Basic Information Technology Skills and Workplace Communication Skills. Delivery modes include via the Internet at the Library Flexi Centre, or at the students' home, work or school (for school-based apprentices).

This project has migrated to the other campuses at the Brisbane Institute of TAFE. Janice Cook (Flexible Learning Network Facilitator and Grovely Faculty Librarian) has worked with teachers at the Grovely Campus to customise the Occupational Health and Safety web-based training product for Turf and Green, Horticulture and Floristry.

The Ithaca Faculty Librarian Team are finalising the customisation of the web-based Occupational Health and Safety learning and assessment resource for delivery areas that include Information Technology, Office Skills, Animal Science, Automotive areas and the remaining Construction Trades.

Macromedia Intensives

The Web Design Intensive 120 hour training program is a joint Art & Design and Library Service short course leading to basic web design, development and maintenance skills using Macromedia's Dreamweaver, Fireworks and Flash. The training team includes Robert Kinder (Art & Design Teacher), Pauline Fountain (Flexible Learning Network Facilitator) and Janice Cook (Flexible Learning Network Facilitator).

Courses to date have been scheduled in semester holiday breaks or evenings and have included:

- September 1999
- December 1999
- January 2000
- February 2000
- Semester 1 (Monday evenings)
- Semester 2 (Tuesday - Thursday evenings).

Course participants have been drawn from diverse backgrounds and include:

- small business owners/managers wanting to establish a web presence
- graphic designers upskilling in web technologies
- market-focussed artists wanting to develop online galleries for their work or wider-art collectives
- multimedia developers updating previous skills
- potential full-time students in graphic design and/or information technology (multimedia) wanting to 'test the water'
- trainers developing online learning options for their students.

Of the total client-base to date 27 of the 71 participants have comprised educational delivery staff from the Brisbane Institute of TAFE i.e. our Teachers, Tutors, and Librarians. Their website outcomes (developed by individuals or small groups) include:

- specific training websites incorporating online learning and assessment resources
- general training support and information websites
- websites developed on behalf of community-based organisations.

The online 'ad capsule' for the Web Design Intensives can be accessed at <http://www.brisbane.tafe.net/projects/fln/macroitens.htm>. This site also provides links to the parallel training support sites developed for each short course.

PREPARATION AND FERTILIZATION

We've all heard the old "as ye sow, so shall ye reap" adage yet it holds true for new training approaches. The preparation and fertilisation stages can seem long, and certainly require persistence and constant and vigilant husbandry. It does take time for something significant to surface. When teacher and librarian partners first set out to raise new approaches, there was much energy and activity below the surface of the Brisbane Institute of TAFE, as the roots of innovative possibilities developed. Project buds seemed to hold promise but they had to be nurtured with resources. Some of these came from Australian National Training Authority funds through Framing the Future and LearnScope programs, as well as a TAFE Queensland Revitalisation Funding Grant. The Institute invested staff time, training, technology and perhaps most important of all, the faith of Institute management that new training products, developed through co-operative staff tending, would indeed flourish. It is once the methodology was established, when the roots have been able to take hold and spread their tendrils across teams and mind sets, that the training growth spurt can occur.

REAPING THE REWARDS

Not all fields of Brisbane's Institute's vocational education and training have been technological tilled, nor are they all ever likely to be. The climate, environment and needs of some of our training holdings mean that technology will not readily transplant. Our strategy is to meet client demands and this will always be the overwhelming factor governing our resource production methodologies. However we believe that when we practice what we preach, when we give librarians and teachers the opportunities and resources to learn new skills and apply them in their own fields of expertise, both reap the rewards along with our clients.

While we are keen to have the Brisbane Institute of TAFE absolutely blooming, we also have a commitment to the wider landscape of Vocational Education and Training. So we invite you all to grow professional partnerships of your own. Please take a packet of our seed with you and follow the instructions:

- Plant the seeds of partnership with a sunny disposition
- Provide the seeds with enough protection to ensure they become established, while not stunting individual growth
- Be patient. Recognise that initial changes are occurring, even though they might be hard to see at first
- Once you see the flowers, stand back, then harvest the blooms.